

One potential explanation for Secretary Babbitt's alleged reference to \$500,000 in Indian campaign contributions is that he was stating his observation of contributions made in the previous election cycle by the Mashantucket Pequot tribe of Connecticut. On May 1, 1995, during the period in which the Hudson application was under consideration, Interior announced its decision to take additional land into trust adjacent to the Pequot's Foxwoods Casino. Although all other witnesses told investigators that they had never heard Babbitt discuss campaign contributions by Indian tribes – nor heard that subject discussed in his presence – Duffy had a somewhat vague recollection that, at the end of a conference call, while he and Babbitt were still on the line or had just completed a call, it was mentioned that the Pequots had made campaign contributions on the order of \$400,000.<sup>712</sup> Duffy was unable to precisely place that conversation precisely in time, but given the proximity in time between the Pequot and Hudson application decisions, it is certainly plausible that Babbitt would have in his mind these large contributions made by another Indian tribe. Babbitt testified he did not recall hearing any such comment and that in July 1995 he had no specific knowledge of the Pequot's contribution levels. However, he said “[i]f Duffy said it, [he has] no reason to dispute it.”<sup>713</sup>

Regarding his correspondence with McCain and Thompson about Eckstein, Babbitt agreed that the August 1996 letter to Sen. McCain “could fairly be read to be misleading as to the

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<sup>712</sup>As set forth above in note 411, Duffy recalled participating in a conference call with Babbitt on the Pequot dispute which involved senators, state and local officials, and representatives of both the tribes and its opponents, apparently prior to July 1995.

<sup>713</sup>*Id.* at 170-71.